

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 AID-05 OMB-01 EUR-12 /111 W  
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R 190725Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9784  
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3845

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR SREF BG BM  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ZIA'S CONCERN ABOUT BURMA BORDER: FIRING INCIDENT

SUMMARY: BANGLADESH PRESIDENT ZIA IS WORRIED THAT THE SITUATION  
ON THE BURMESE BORDER MAY BECOME MORE SERIOUS. HIS CONCERNS MAY  
HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY A FIRING INCIDENT WHICH BANGLA-  
DESHI SOURCES SAID JUNE 16 HAD TAKEN PLACE "SEVERAL DAYS  
AGO". END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN I MET BANGLADESH PRESIDENT ZIA FOR A REVIEW OF  
U.S. BANGLADESH RELATIONS IN JUNE 17, I TOLD HIM OF U.S.  
SUPPORT FOR THE BILATERAL PROCESS BY WHICH NATIONS OF SOUTH  
ASIA HAD WORKED OUT THEIR PROBLEMS WITH EACH OTHER AND  
ESTABLISHED SATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIPS. I ALSO NOTED  
THAT WE THOUGHT IT WELL THAT THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT  
WAS TRYING TO WORK OUT ITS REFUGEE PROBLEM WITH THE  
GOVERNMENT OF BURMA BILATERALLY. I SAID THAT WE HAD  
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SPOKE TO THE BURMESE OF THE DESIRABILITY OF STAYING IN  
COMMUNICATION JUST AS WE HAD TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

2. WHEN HE REPLIED TO MY GENERAL PRESENTATION, ZIA  
SPOKE BRIEFLY ABOUT THE BURMESE ISSUE. HE REFERRED TO  
THE BURDEN ON AN ALREADY POOR COUNTRY OF WHAT HE SAID  
WERE 200,000 REFUGEES. HE CLAIMED THAT ALL OF THE REFU-

GEES WERE RESIDENTS OF BURMA AND THAT BURMA SHOULD AGREE TO TAKE THEM BACK. ALTHOUGH I DID NOT RAISE THE ISSUE, ZIA SAID THAT BANGLADESH HAD GIVEN ABSOLUTELY NO REPEAT NO SUPPORT TO ARAKANESE MUSLIMS IN BURMA. HE SAID THAT BANGLADESH HAD NO REPEAT NO INTEREST BEYOND ITS ONW BORDER. BUT, HE SAID WITHOUT EXPLAINING HIS MEANING, THE SITUATION ON THE BORDER COULD BECOME SERIOUS.

3. COMMENT: ZIA IS, OF COURSE, WRONG ABOUT THE RESIDENCE OF ALL BURMESE REFUGEES. WE DOUBT THAT THIS IS THE POSITION OF HIS NEGOTIATIRS. NOTHING ZIA SAID EXPLAINED HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION ON THE BORDER'S POSSIBLY BECOMING SERIOUS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF (BRIG. MANNAF), HOWEVER, ON JUNE 16 HAD CONFIRMED TO ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN A FIRING INCIDENT ALONG THE BURMESE BORDER SEVERAL DAYS PREVIOUSLY. THEY HAD SOUGHT TO KEEP THE INCIDENT QUIET BUT SAID IT HAD LEAKED. INDEED, WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS CIRCULATING THAT PERSONNEL OF THE BANGLADESH RIFLES HAVE BEEN WOUNDED ON THE BORDER AND ARE NOW IN A HOSPITAL IN CHITTAGONG. MANNAF SAID THAT THE ARMY WONDERS IF THE BURMESE MAY CONTEMPLATE SOME MILITARY ACTION AND ALLEGED THAT HE HAD INFORMATION THAT BURMESE MILITARY FORCES HAD BEEN MOVED. (HIS REPORT THAT A SOVIET SUBMARINE HAD BEEN SIGNED IN THE AREA OF THE NAAF RIVER SUGGESTS HOW HIS INFORMATION NEEDS TO BE EVALUATED.)  
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MANNAF SAID THAT THE BANGLADESH ARMY HAD NOT MOVED ITS FORCES WHICH ARE SIXTY MILES FROM THE BORDER AT THE NEAREST POINT. HE REPORTED THAT THE BANGLADESH MILITARY (NOTE - WE ASSUME THIS IS THE BANGLADESH RIFLES) IS, HOWEVER, PATROLING THE NAAF RIVER AS THEY ASSUME THAT ANY BURMESE ACTION WOULD BE SUPPLIED VIA THE RIVER. MANNAF ASKED ME IF I HAD ANY INFORMATION ABOUT BURMESE TROOP MOVEMENTS. WHILE I AM RELUCTANT TO GET DRAWN INTO THIS MATTER, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO REPLY THAT I HAD NO SUCH INFORMATION WHATSOEVER.  
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## Message Attributes

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